

The Perfection of the Evangelical Revelation.

A
S E R M O N

Preached at

St. Martins in the Fields, Jan. 6. 169^s.

B E I N G T H E

First of the LECTURE

For this Present Y E A R,

Founded by the Honourable

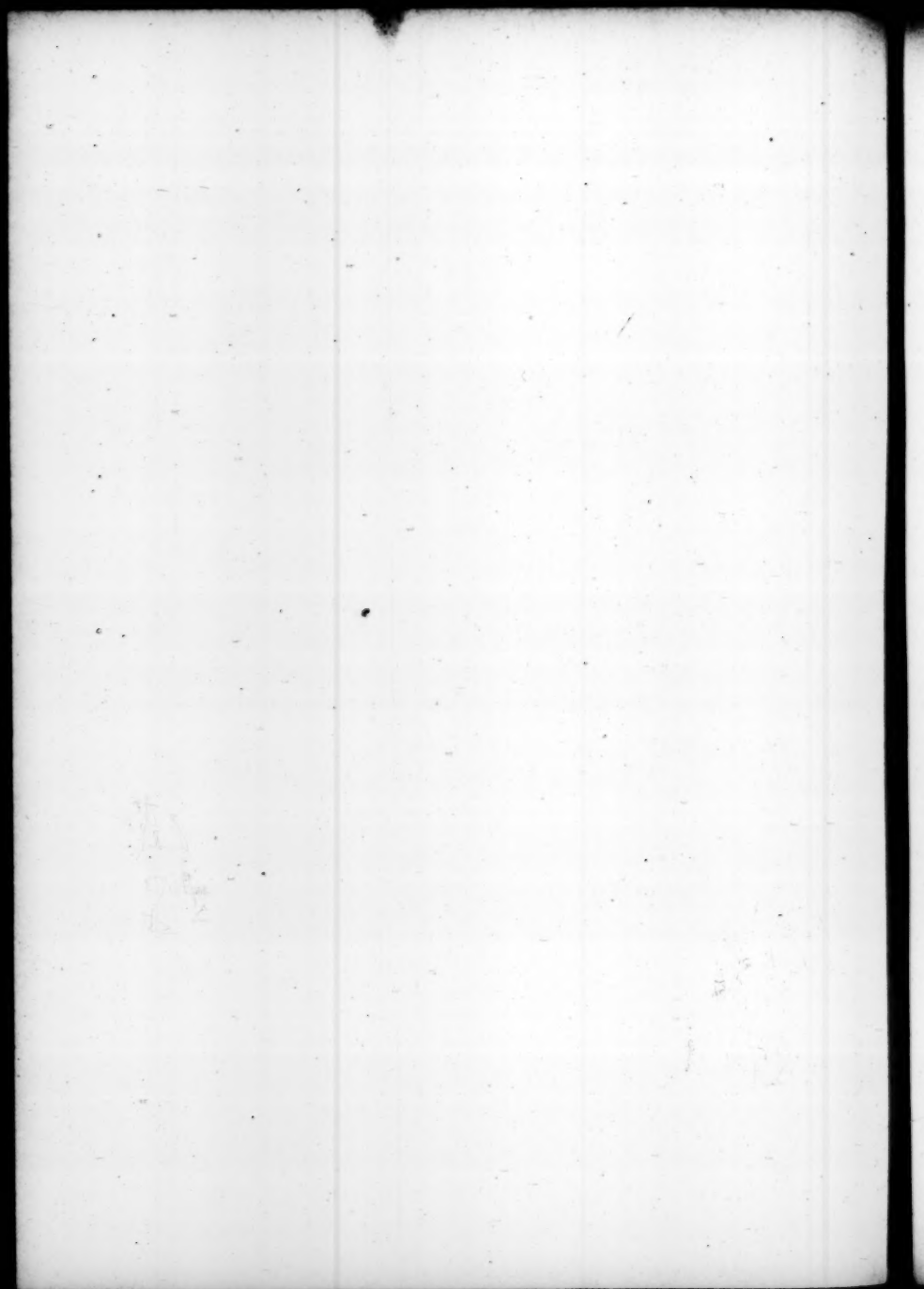
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Chaplain in Ordinary to His Majesty.

L O N D O N :

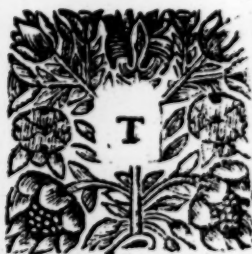
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G A L. I. 8, 9.

*Though we, or an Angel from heaven,
preach any other Gospel unto you, than
that which we have preached unto you,
let him be accursed.*

*As we said before, so say I now again, If
any man preach any other Gospel unto
you than that ye have received, let him
be accursed.*



THE People of the Jews having been all along trained up under the Law of *Moses*, and by virtue of it possess'd of peculiar Advantages beyond any other Nation, were apt to think it as lasting in its Obligation, as Divine in its Original; and that it was no more in the intention of Almighty God to have it abolished, than it could be disproved to have come immediately from him. This made them slow and backward to receive the Gospel, by which

their ancient Constitution would be disannulled ; and after they had believed, it made them inclinable to hearken to such Sophisters, as pretended to compound the Controversy, and to join *Moses* and *Christ*, the Law and the Gospel together, so as to be both alike necessary to Salvation : Which is in effect to set up another Gospel than what the Apostle had taught, and they had received from him ; and therefore he expresses his resentment and indignation against it with the highest aggravations, Verses 6, 7, 8. *I marvel that ye are so soon removed from him that called you into the grace of Christ, unto another Gospel ; Which is not another ; but there be some that trouble you, and would pervert the Gospel of Christ : But though we, or an Angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed, &c.*

In discoursing upon which words : I shall consider,

1. What is understood by the *Gospel*, which the Apostle had preached, and they had received.
2. What by *another Gospel*, against which and the Preachers of it, the Apostle so sharply inveighs, and pronounces an *Anathema*.

3. I shall shew that the Gospel is the only Revelation from God ; and that there is not another, nor is any other to be expected.

1. The Gospel is here opposed to the Law of *Moses*, which there were some in the Churches of *Galatia*, as well as in other places, that would maintain to be necessary to Salvation, if not alone, yet in conjunction with the Gospel (as *afore said*). These two indeed were so far consistent, that the Law was a prefiguration, a Shadow and Type of the Gospel: But being thus a Shadow and a Type of it, That in reason and from the nature of the thing, was to give way, when the Substance came on, and the Types were fulfilled. And therefore though the Law was established at the first by Divine Authority, yet in course was it to cease in its obligation, when the reason of it ceased. And consequently, to plead for its Authority and Obligation, whether in conjunction with, or opposition to the Gospel, was to say that the substance of those Shadows, the completion of those Types, was not accomplished, that Jesus was not the *Messiah*, nor the Gospel true. In this sense these two that in a state of subordination were consistent, by this means were made to be opposites to each other. So

So the Apostle, *Chap. 5. 2. If ye be circumcised, Christ shall profit you nothing. V. 4. —Ye are fallen from grace; ye at the same time deny what you seem to confess; it is a perverting the Gospel of Christ, and establishing another Gospel.*

Acts 11.
26.

But this is only a kind of a negative account of the Gospel; therefore we are to proceed further in the consideration of it; and then we are to understand by the Gospel, the Christian Religion, and more especially that part of it which is called Christian, and for which the Professors of it are called Christians, as distinguished from all Religions besides. All mankind are not more of the same common Nature, than they generally agree in the common Principles of Nature: And that which is natural to all, cannot be a Character by which one man is distinguished from another. But when a Man or Institution is called Christian, it is for somewhat peculiar, and distinct from that which is common to all. And therefore though the Law of Nature be a branch of the Christian Religion, as it was of the *Mosaical*, and is also in it self of a never-failing obligation; yet there is a supervenient Institution, and somewhat besides that which denominates us to be Christians, without the belief and practice of which, we can no more be entitled to that

to that Character, than that can be called a Natural Religion which excludes, or is contradictory to the Laws of Nature, and the just Reason of Mankind.

And of the number of such Principles, which are necessary to the Constitution of Christianity, and consequently to the Character of a Christian, and are the Articles of his Faith, are the Incarnation and Nativity, the Death and Resurrection and Glorification of our Saviour.

1. His Nativity and Incarnation. So 1 John 4. 2, 3. *He that denieth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is not of God.*

2. His Death, as he died for Mankind, and was a Sacrifice for Sin. So St. Paul, 1 Cor. 15. 1, 2, 3. *I declare unto you the Gospel, which also ye have heard, and wherein ye stand, by which also ye are saved. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures. So that to believe in Jesus as the Messiah, and as a Suffering Messiah, was according to the Scriptures, and by the belief of which we are to be saved.*

3. His Resurrection, and what was consequent upon it, his Glorification, the reward of his Humiliation. In which state he is consti-

*Phil. 2.
8, 9.*

✓ B

tured

1 Tim 2. 5, 6. tuted our Mediator. From the connexion be-
 Hebr. 9. twixt which two, his Death and Intercession,
 14, 15, it is, that we seldom read in Scripture of the one
 23. without the other.

1 John 2.
 1, 2.

These are constituent and essential Articles of Christianity; and if these, or any of these are omitted, as it is not Christianity which is left, and it would be another Gospel; so it is what the Apostle's Anathema will be applicable to.

From whence we may be able to answer the next Question.

2. What is to be understood by *another Gospel*?

When the Apostle speaks here of *another Gospel*, he thereby means somewhat that is added to it, and with it made necessary to Salvation, as it was when the observation of the Law of *Moses* was maintained to be as obligatory to the Christians, as ever it had been to the *Jews*.

From which Case, by a parity of Reason we may argue, That whatever alters the Terms and Conditions of the Gospel, and makes that necessary to Salvation which the Gospel has not made necessary; or that unnecessary which the Gospel has made necessary, is such a perverting it as makes it another Gospel: For that is to set

up

up that as a Divine Revelation, which hath not the Divine Authority to confirm it.

For it is God alone that can appoint the Terms of Salvation ; and so, what no man, or Society of men, has any Authority in, to frame, alter or revoke. The necessary Articles of Faith, and Instances of our Duty, must have a Divine Establishment ; and so what we must learn either from the invariable Principles and Dictates of Human Nature, or pure Revelation.

2. That is *another Gospel* which pretends to a Revelation from God for its Authority, when it is of Human invention or imagination : And that whether for the matter of it, it be true, or false. It may for the matter of it be true, and yet not be a Revelation, but proceed only from men ; and then to place that to the account of Revelation, though it be for the matter of it true, is a notorious falshood and Imposture. But if for the matter of it, it be false, it's a double Falshood ; as it pretends to a Revelation, which is not Revelation, and also calls in the Veracity of God to give testimony to a falshood.

Supposing then that the Immaculate Conception of the Virgin *Mary*, Transubstantiation and Purgatory are true, yet to plead a Revela-

tion for them, as it is pleaded in the Church of
 Rome *, if there were no such Revelation, doth
 fix such an indelible blot upon the pretended
 Infallible Church, as all the Water of *Tiber* can-
 not cleanse. But if it should prove false (as
 those things certainly are) then it is to add a sort
 of Blasphemy to the Imposture, as it makes the
 God of Truth to justify a Falshood.

*Breviar.
 Rom.
 Octob 8.
 Bellarm.
 de Purg.
 l. 1. c. 11.
 de Eucha.
 l. 3. c. 8.

3. That is another Gospel, which doth esta-
 blish another Rule, or adds to, or detracts from
 that which is established, *Rev. 22. 18.*

Now the Scripture is the Rule of Faith and
 Practice; and then to alter the Rule, by adding
 to it, or taking from it, is to alter the Gospel
 (which that contains the Revelation of) as they
 do in the Church of *Rome*, who not only add
 the *Apocrypha* to the Canon; but, as the *Pharisees*
 of old, give the same Authority to Unwritten
 Tradition, as to the Scripture; and require it
 to be received *with the like pious regard*, accord-
 ing to the Council of *Trent*.

Lastly, To alter, to add to, or diminish
 from the Fundamental Articles or Principles of
 it, is to make it another Gospel; as it is to deny
 Christ to be a Mediator, or to appoint other
 Mediators than him, such as Angels and Saints.

By

By so doing, the Gospel is rendred as imperfect, and the Scripture as an imperfect Revelation of it. But this there is no occasion for; as I shall now shew by proving, That

3. The Gospel, or Revelation, made known to the World by Jesus Christ, is always to continue the same; and no new, or other Revelation is to be expected.

This was the Sum of the last Lecture, and is to be the remaining Subject of this.

There have been such, in several Ages of the Church, both anciently, and of late, that have pretended to new Revelations; and that there was a more perfect Dispensation to ensue, than what was contained in the Gospel. Of this Opinion were the *Montanists* of old; and of this mind seems to have been *Abbas Joachim*, who flourished about the Year 1200. And what was also expressly maintained in the *Evangelium Æternum*, or *Everlasting Gospel*, chiefly taken out of the Works of *Joachim*, and published by the *Mendicant Fryars* about 1254. Wherein it was affirmed, * That the Doctrine of that Abbot excelled that of Christ: * That the Gospel of Christ was to give way to another Gospel, called the *Everlasting Gospel*; or Gospel of the Holy Ghost.

And

Matth.
Par. Hist.
An. Dom.
1255.

Eymeri-
cus, Di-
rect. In-
quisit.
Gul. de
S. Amore
de peric.
noviss.
temp.
Prateolus
de Her.
l. 4.
V.D^r Stil-
lingfleet,
Fanati-
cism of
the Ro-
man
Church.

And this was a Doctrine spread far and near, among the *Beguardi* in *Germany*, the *Alumbrados* in *Spain*, and the *Fratricelli* in *Italy*, &c. The Spawn of which continued for a long season in several parts, and in some till *Ann. Dom. 1560.* who all agreed, that their Doctrine came from God by as immediate Inspiration as ever the Gospel of Christ did.

I deny not, but that there may be some particular Revelation or Inspiration, with respect to some especial Case: But as it may arise, for ought we know, from imagination, so if it be not attended with great caution and circumspection, may end in the Whims and Frenzies of a *Brigit*, a *Catharina*, or a Mother *Juliana*, and what not? Nay, it may proceed to the disannulling the Gospel it self, and to the preferring their own Inspirations (as they will have it) above it.

But supposing it to be true, that there may be now some particular Inspirations from God in such special cases; yet it is to be supposed that they are agreeable to the Gospel Revelation; but if once they contradict it, it can be no more a true Revelation, than the Gospel can be false; and yet such must be a Revelation that will make the Gospel to cease in its obligation, and to be of no more Authority to Mankind, than the Law of *Moses*.

When

When the obligation arises not from the nature of the thing, but from positive Institution, it is in the power of the Lawgiver to bind or loose, to establish or evacuate a Law as he thinks fit. And thus it was in the Law of *Moses*, which consisted of things typical, that had a special reference to that people, and the place of their Habitation, &c. Such were the distribution of the Tribes, the preservation of their Genealogies, their three great Festivals, their *Sabbatical Year*, and *Year of Jubile*, &c. Of this temporary nature also were the Ceremonies of the Law, which either had a relation to the Customs of the Nations conterminous to them; or to a more perfect State that was in process of time to succeed it. The Laws relating to which could not be supposed to be of any force, when They were excluded that Land, and the Tribes were lost and confounded; no more than the Laws relating to the Wilderness and the Tabernacle, could oblige them when they were settled in *Canaan*, and that they had a Temple erected there.

And therefore the phrase *for ever*, when annexed to that Constitution, must have a laxer interpretation accordingly allowed, which was, That it should continue to oblige (as it follows often

Ex. 12. often where that Phrase is used) *throughout their*
 17. *generations* ; that is , whilst they were that Peo-
 Lev. 23. ple, so embodied, and so situated.
 14.

And had the Gospel consisted of such things that were thus mutable in themselves, or thus peculiar to any People, Time, or Place ; there might be reason to admit it to be temporary ; and to be evacuated when time should serve, as the Law was ; But there is nothing either in the nature of the thing, nor is there any notification of the Divine Will concerning any time set for its expiration ; but rather the contrary ; and so there is not the same reason for a new Dispensation after the Evangelical, as there was for the Evangelical after the *Mosaical*.

I grant that it is as possible in it self for God to reveal himself at some time hereafter, as it was for him to have revealed himself heretofore : And he that revealed himself under the Law, and at the first Institution of the Gospel, may, if he so please, after the same manner reveal himself at any time, or times. But he that will assert the futurity of this, must have more to prove it than a possibility. It is certain God has revealed himself, and that the Gospel was by Revelation from him : But there is not the like certainty for a Revelation after the Gospel, or in after

after-times of the Gospel, as there is, that the Gospel it self was of Divine Revelation.

It is certain that the Gospel has been the only Revelation for above 1600 years past, and that we have had no other Revelation than that contained in the Scripture : And therefore whatever Pretences any Persons or Age made to it, were apparently Mistakes and Impostures ; for that Dispensation of the Holy Ghost, which each Sect fancied to be in their Age, or near to it, is yet to come, if ever it is to be.

V. Spondani Annal. Eccles. Ann. Dom. 1204. de Almarico

But to give some further light and force to this Argument, I shall shew,

1. That there is no proof of any other Revelation, than the Gospel of our Saviour, and now recorded and preserved in the Holy Scripture.

2. That there is no need of any further Revelation.

3. That the Scripture shuts up all Revelation with it self, so that no other Revelation is to be expected beyond it.

1. There is no proof of any other Revelation, than what is contained in the Scripture.

If any one will contend, that there either is, or shall be such a Revelation, he must have some Revelation to prove it : And that must either be an antecedent Revelation, such as Scripture is taken to be ; or it must be some personal Revelation, made to himself, or to some other credible Person or Persons.*

But where is the Revelation of this Revelation ?

If it be to be found in Scripture, where is the Prediction of such a State, That the Gospel shall be superannuated, and another of greater perfection shall grow out of it ?

Under the Law there was a plain signification of another Revelation to be in the time of the *Messiah* ; and of a more perfect state of things to ensue. But where are the Proofs as plain under the Gospel for a New Revelation, as there were for that of the Gospel under the Law ? Or where is it said of that, as it is of the Law, that it *decayeth*, or is antiquated, and *waxeth old*, and so is *ready to*, or shall at last, *vanish away* ? Our Apostle here saith on the contrary, *If we, or an Angel from heaven, preach any other Gospel unto you, than that which we have preached unto you, let him be accursed.*

Heb. 8.
13.

If it be a personal Revelation, then we may reasonably demand, Where is the Evidence for such a Revelation?

All Revelation must have a sufficient Evidence; and if it be a true Revelation, and what obliges us to receive it as such, it will be able to produce its Evidence.

And a New Revelation must suppose a better sort of Evidence than the former, or at least equal to it. There must be the like wonderful Works; the Blind must as miraculously be made to see, and the Lame to walk, and the Diseased to be whole, and the Dead to rise. Nay, Christ himself must again descend from Heaven, and dye, and rise, and ascend; or else the Miracles will fall short of what it is in competition with.

Nay, it must proceed farther, and its Evidence must not only be equal, but superior also to that which it is to supplant. It was not only fit that *Moses's* Rod should be turn'd into a Serpent, but when the Magicians pretended to do the same, to shew his Power to be greater than theirs, his Serpentine Rod swallowed up theirs.

It was not enough that he brought forth Ex. 7. 12.
Frogs, when *Jannes* and *Jambres* produced the 2 Tim.
like, 3. 8.

Ex. 8.
18, 19.

like ; but that he should do what they could not, and so what would oblige them to acknowledge it to be *the Finger of God*.

John 15.
24.

And thus our Saviour being to advance a new Scheme of things, did not only shew he was the Person described, and prophesied of ; but also by his numerous Miracles, and many of them such as never any, neither *Moses*, nor any Prophetical Person, ever did work.

If then there be no such Evidence for such a new Revelation, (where there is a pretence to it) we may conclude it to be *another Gospel*, a supposititious Revelation, and what is to have no credence given to it, no regard paid to it. It's Anathema.

2. There is no need of any further Revelation. Revelation has somewhat in it of a Miracle ; it is a way extraordinary ; and as we cannot suppose God will work Miracles, and break through the standing Laws of Nature, when there is no occasion for it, nor necessity to require it ; so we cannot suppose he will communicate himself by a way of Revelation, and immediate Inspiration, and much less break down an Established Order of his own appointment, when there is as much reason for the Continuance of it, as for the Institution ; and that it answers all the Ends for which

which a new Constitution can be framed, or a new Revelation made.

The Apostle argues, *If the first Covenant had been faultless, there should no place have been sought for the second: And if there be a place for a Third,* there must be some fault or imperfection chargeable upon the Second. But that I shall shew it to be freed from; and that the Second Covenant or Gospel-Revelation is so perfect, that there is no need of another. For,

(1.) There can be no more noble and useful Subject for a Revelation, than that of the Gospel, which is concerning God's Reconciliation to Mankind, and their Redemption by the Death of his Son.

And where this is plainly revealed, there is no place for a Second, nor any need of a new Revelation.

(2.) If we consider the Gospel-Revelation as a Covenant, consisting of Promises and Conditions; there cannot be more excellent and beneficial than those, nor more necessary than these.

For what can be proposed of greater advantage unto Mankind, than what the Gospel offers to those that believe and obey it? It is no less than

than the favour of God, the blessing and protection of his Providence, the assistance of his Spirit, and in the close of all, Everlasting Life, a translation out of this mortal, uncomfortable, and uncertain State, to a State of unchangeable Happiness; where Body and Soul shall again be united, *When this corruptible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall put on immortality.* An Encouragement that is the highest Cordial that can work upon Humane Nature, and will (if any Consideration can) qualify the Troubles of this present Life, and set a man above the fears of an exclusion out of it.

And when this is promised, there can nothing be offer'd beyond it; nor is there any need to find out others after this is proposed.

And such as the Promises are, such are the Conditions required of us, which are as unchangeable as the Reward: those indeed are unchangeable from the Divine Declaration, and God's faithfulness; but these are unchangeable from the nature of the things, as well as the Divine Command. So that there is no room for another Revelation, unless we can change the nature of things, and make evil good, and good evil; and put darkness for light, and light for darkness; unless we will dissolve all Order, and
con-

confound all Relations, and set the Creature loose from all obligations of Love, and Gratitude, and Service to the Creator. Terms surely incapable of abatement or alteration. For who can suppose Mankind should be left at liberty, whether they would love God, or neglect him; whether obey, or violate his Laws; whether they would be vertuous or vicious; and whether they would believe in Jesus, and own him to be their Saviour; or, with the *Jews*, reject him, and *not have him to reign over them*? Alter the Promises and Conditions, and there is *another Gospel*, and another Revelation; but till they are altered, or alterable, there needs no New Revelation.

All the abatements or relaxations that can be allowed, are inserted into the body of this Revelation; where there is a two-fold allowance; an allowance of remission for whatever sins are past, and truly repented of; and an allowance for Humane Infirmities under the strictest obligations to our duty. And lower than these the Gospel doth not, nor for the reason before given, can descend; since then it would countenance Impenitence, and establish Iniquity by a Law; and then indeed it had been an imperfect, a defective, a faulty Covenant, and there would have been a place for a New. 3. The

(3.) The extent of this Law, or New Covenant, is such as none can exceed it; for it is as much fitted for the whole Race of Mankind, as any could be for any particular Nation. The Law of *Moses* was a Law to the *Jews*, suited to their Temper and Circumstances in its original Frame and Constitution; and so what other Nations, as Nations, could not come within the benefit of; nor could particular Persons, otherwise than as they became Profelytes, and made themselves subject to it by the same way of initiation in Circumcision. And it is of the nature of all Humane Laws (though the general Lines running through them are one and the same) that they are fitted for the immediate use and service of that People, whose Laws they are; and which therefore vary infinitely, and alter as Circumstances alter, and as Reasons of State require.

But now the Gospel-Dispensation comprehends in it all Nations, and they are all to that as if they were but one People. It was our Saviour's Commission to his Apostles after his Resurrection, *Go ye into all the world, and preach the Gospel to every creature.* And such as the Commission was, such were the Rules and Precepts they were to give and publish, which were of universal

Matth.
28. 19.
Mark
16. 15.

universal concernment and obligation ; and neither confined by Persons nor Places, by Times nor Circumstances, but what all Persons, in all Places, Times and Circumstances, are equally obliged to observe; and which are of that nature, and have such a tendency to the good welfare and happiness of Mankind, whether alone, or in Society, whether as particular Persons, or Families, or Nations; that if exactly observed, purity, and peace, and love would every where abound, and the Earth be a kind of Paradise again.

And therefore, if there be any Narrowness of mind, and feuds among Mankind, if Vice and Wickedness overflow the World, it is not for want of a Law every way perfect to bind and restrain them; or that there need *another Gospel* to mend them; but for the reason given by St. James, --- *from their lusts that war in their members.* Jam.4.1.

(4.) If we consider the Evidence given to the Gospel-Revelation, we shall find there needs no other evidence to be given to that Revelation; nor that there needs any other Revelation for want of Evidence in this. Our Saviour's Life was a Life of Miracles as well as Innocence; and where ever he went, the Divine Power went along with him; *for in him dwelt the ful-*

D

ness

ness of the Godhead bodily. And which he exerted where-ever he came, and as occasion served, to the confusion, if not the conviction or conversion of his Adversaries; and all which at last concluded in his own Resurrection from the dead, his Ascension into Heaven, and the effusion of the Holy Ghost, which began on *Pentecost*, but like a torrent ran on through the Apostolical Age, and bore down all manner of competition. And what then can any Revelation pretend to beyond it? or where can there be any that can be suppos'd to produce the like Evidence for its veracity? (as I have just before observ'd.)

Lastly, How can we have a Gospel that can pretend to vye with that which the Son of God came into the World to reveal, who was the last that was to come from Heaven; and when
 Jude 3. our Faith is that which was once delivered to the Saints. Once for all; and so there is no more another Faith or Revelation to be expected after that, than another Mediator after Him, who
 Hebr. 9. was once offered to bear the sins of many.

28.

This leads to the Third Branch.

3. The Scripture shuts up all with this Revelation; and because we have now no Revelation but that Written Revelation, we cannot suppose

pose any Revelation beyond it, and much less derogatory to it; or that shall direct us to any other way by which we are to be saved, than that we have already received, and is therein recorded.

I have before observed, that the time from our Blessed Saviour's appearance, and the publication of the Gospel by him (to his second coming) is called the *last days* in Scripture, and consequently has none to succeed it. So the Apostle, *As it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment*: So Christ was once offered to bear the sins of many; and unto them that look for him, shall he appear the second time; without a sin-offering, unto salvation. That is, as there is no alteration in the state from Death unto Judgment, but as men dye, so they will appear to be at Judgment: So there is no alteration to be between Christ's first appearing, when he offered himself; and his second, when he shall so come in like manner as he was seen to go into heaven. Serm. 8.
of the last
Year.
Hebr. 9.
27, 28.

If therefore there is to be any alteration as to this Revelation, it is not to be before, but must be after our Saviour's second appearance. But of that we have nothing to say.

Thus far as I have consider'd the Argument, there may be very few supposed to be concern-

ed; that is, such as set up another Revelation in opposition to the Gospel-Revelation; or that maintain the Revelation of the Gospel to be only temporary, and that it shall have its season in which it is to expire, and be succeeded by another. And it may seem to be scarcely worth the while to have spent so much time upon it with respect to such wild Enthusiasts as have been, and still are in the World.

P. 10. But however, what has been hitherto said, may be of further use with reference to another Case, just mentioned before, and that is the Case of personal and occasional Revelation; which may be conceived only to serve to a more spiritual manifestation of the Revelation already received, and so be no more derogatory to that Revelation, than occasional or personal Revelation heretofore in the *Mosaical* State was to the Body of that Law which was of immediate and Divine Revelation, and of universal obligation to that People.

I would not altogether deny this; because I know not how far some Persons may in some cases be enlightened by a Spirit of Prophecy; nor what particular directions they may receive in an extraordinary way in some special Cases with respect to themselves, to others, and the Church
of

of God; which may be like a special Providence to some particular persons. But now as a man must govern himself by the general Rules of Divine Providence, and not by particular; and because he has sometimes met with Deliverances, and Supplies, and Directions beyond all his own foresight and reasoning, must not forsake his own reasoning and care, and wholly rely upon the Extraordinary: So it is to be here; a person may perhaps have some occasional Revelation, some Divine Inspiration, at some special Season, or in some special Case; but if he forsakes the Ordinary to depend upon the Extraordinary, and expects Revelation in every case, because he has had it in some particulars, he will as much be subject to error, and err no less dangerously, than if he wholly relied upon Divine Providence, and forsook all other means whatsoever.

And truly this is a way much liable to be abused, and to mislead persons, and is very suspicious and dangerous.

1. It is a Case liable to imposture and abuse, forasmuch as those that are under the influence of such a conception, are not always, if at all, capable of making a certain judgment of it. For it is all transacted within,

within, and the Imagination may be so much influenced by the Body, and by an agitation of the Humours and Animal Spirits, from an Enthusiastal and even a devout Temper, by prepossessions and foreconceived Principles, and even by the Circumstances of Life, that it may be wholly natural; as natural as Dreams, or the Deliriums of a Fever, which proceed from the ebullition of the Blood, and such like ordinary Causes.

2. Persons have been imposed upon, and taken the effect of Imagination for Inspiration and Divine Illumination. I am far from condemning all the Instances of this kind, of Hypocrisy, and of a design to deceive, like *Maria Visitationis* in Portugal. I will rather think more charitably, That very often they have thought themselves thus moved and acted by the Spirit of God: And yet notwithstanding all their Pretences, and the opinion others have had of them, it has been afterwards evident, that it has been far from being a Divine Infusion and Illumination. What shall we think of *Teresa*, whose Life is full of her Visions and Revelations; and of whom we are told by one of that Way, That besides many other extatical Sights in the Kingdom of Heaven, she often had the sight and company of the Holy Trinity, of each person

*Jesus
Maria.
Joseph.
Teresa.
composed
by Paul
of St. U-
bald.
1654.*

person in particular, that they spoke to her, and she to them; and used to ask, and did obtain particular favours of each. --- that God shew'd her how all Creatures are contained in his Divine Essence, as in a Chrystal glass, and that she saw therein the thoughts words, and deeds of all men. This (and truly she had reason to think so) she said was one of the greatest favours to her. Part. 3.
P. 65,
71, 86.
P. 72.

Now if we would but alter the place, and for the Nunnery conceive her to be in a Hospital, we should take it to be, what that Author in a transport sometimes calls it, a Phrenzy.

And what a Legend of Dreams would the World be furnished with, if the Visions and Revelations of this kind were bundl'd up together, as the Miracles of reputed Saints have sometimes been? Legenda
aurea.
Bolan-
dus, &c.

3. They are very much to be suspected of Imposture.

(1.) And that because we read so little of this way in Scripture, even in the Apostolical Times, and nothing to encourage us in the expectation of it afterwards: We read nothing there of the Union of the Soul to the Divine Essence, of its being absorpt and drowned over head and ears, and ingulphed in the depth of Divinity, so that it became one and the same with God, by a true Deification. We read there Ubal-
P. 14, 16,
41.

2 Cor.
12. 1,
&c.

there sparingly of some Extasies ; as one of St. Peter, and one or two of St. Paul ; but with how much reserve and modesty doth the Holy Apostle speak, when he comes to *Visions and Revelations of the Lord*, when he heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter ?

But what can be greater, if these of *Teresa* be true ? And where might we more expect to be entertained with the Relations of such *Rapts*, as in the Gospel ? So that when they are there so unusual, and here so frequent, that even Societies are embodied and formed from it, we have reason to suspect.

(2.) It's much to be suspected, when that which is the proper means of judging, and of distinguishing Imagination from Revelation, is laid aside, which is Reason ; and when all is resolved into the Person's own testimony.

We are required in all Cases to *search*, and to *try*, which doth suppose the free exercise of our Reason ; and when this is reject'd, 'tis a sign there is no truth in the thing pretended.

(3.) It is suspicious, when they exalt their own private Revelations to the same Authority with the Revelations of Holy Writ ; and seek to justify the one by the other.

(4.) When they esteem the way of Religion, as describ'd in Scripture, to be mean, in comparison of this that they are in, and prefer this way of Contemplation and Inspiration above the plain Precepts of Christianity: When it is a condescension in them to join in External Worship. Thus it is given by Father *Ubold* as an instance of the attainment of one to some degree of this rapturous state, that when the hour of Prayer was spent, he could hardly be persuaded that it was so, not knowing what Prayer he was in. P. 57.
n. 4.

And the famous *Quietist*, *Molinos*, reports of *Gregory Lopez*, “That having for the space of three Years continued that Ejaculation, Thy will be done in Time, and in Eternity; repeating it as often as he breathed; God discovered to him that infinite Treasure of the pure and continued Act of Faith and Love; and that during the 36 years he lived after, he always continued that pure Act of Love, without ever uttering the least Petition, Ejaculation, or any thing that was sensible. *Spiritual Guide*,
lib. 1.
c. 17.
n. 135.

So that all is by this means resolved into a spiritual and senseless frame and course, a certain stillness and quietness, as *Molinos* expresseth it, when the Soul doth not know whether it be alive or dead, lost or gained, agrees or resists; this, saith he, is the

E

true

true resigned life. Where there is no External Service for the Mind to be concerned in, no External Object to be attended to.

A state of Perfection that is above what the Gospel doth describe ; and is *another Gospel* than what we have in Scripture received ; and which there needs an uncontroulable Evidence for ; the want of which increaseth the suspicion. For,

(5.) There is no Evidence for all this beyond their own simple affirmation. And who is there without good Evidence that can believe that those Rapturous Ladies, (such as *Santa Teresa*, and *Donna Marina d' Escobar*) did in *Molinos's* Phrase, *hear and talk with God hand to hand* ; when he reads the interlocutory matters that are said to have passed between them ; as for Example, *Whenever (saith Teresa) the Lord commanded me any thing, if my Confessor told me another ; I turned to the Lord, and told him that I must obey my Confessor. This, saith that grave man upon it, is sound and true Doctrine which secures Souls ; or rather confounds and destroys them. This puts me in mind of what the same Author elsewhere observes, The desire of Revelations uses to be a great hindrance to the interiour Soul, especially to women ; and there is not an ordinary Dream, but they will christen it with the name of a Vision.*

Bid. Preface,
n. 17.

L. 2. c. 2.
& c. 9.
n. 71.

Ibid. l. 2.
c. 6. n. 46.

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The World, especially one part of it, has been much imposed upon, when credulous this way. The Pretence abovesaid, of *Maria Visitationis*, is an Instance beyond all exception, who imposed upon her Confessor (no less a man than *Lewis Granada*) the Inquisition, and even on the Pope himself: And yet notwithstanding she pretended to somewhat more than internal for her converse with our Saviour, &c. was detected at last of notorious Imposture.

*V. Lud. à
Paramo de
Orig. In-
quisit. &
Bp. Wor.
Fanat. of
the Church
of Rome.*

But most of the Visionaries (we are speaking of) pretended not to so much. And therefore where there is no external Evidence attempted by them, nor that we have the gift of Intuition to see into their inward and Self-evidence, we have no reason to think otherwise of such Illuminations, and Introversions, and Interlocutions, than at best the effects of an heated Imagination. But of this before.

And so much the rather are we to be careful in these matters, and not to be too easy of belief, P. 15.

4. Because it may be very dangerous in the consequence of it. For if instead of a Star, it should prove an *Ignis fatuus*, whither may not Persons be led under the delusion of it? For what will not be concluded to be lawful, nay, a duty, which Revelation shall warrant? And where will this end, if it once be credited, and that we commit our selves implicitly and blindly to such an uncertain Guide? So that in the issue, such a Spirit of Revelation, as it is not promised by God, and therefore not reasonable to be expected; so it is not to be desired.

I shall conclude this with a Saying of one conversant in that way, *You must not think them holiest, that have Consolations, Visions, and Revelations; for many are* *Ubald.
ibid.
part. 3.
c. 6. n. 13.*
great.

great Saints that never had any of them; and others that had Visions and Gifts are not therefore Saints; for true Sanctity doth consist in solid vertue, and true conformity of our will to the will of God in all things, &c.

I freely acknowledge that there will be a great alteration in the present state of the Church, before the close of the whole, and before an end shall be put to Christ's Mediatory Kingdom upon Earth; When the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains; and all nations shall flow unto it. When the wolf shall dwell with the lamb, &c. and that the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea; that there shall be but one Church over all the World, by the conversion of the Jews, and the coming in of the fulness of the Gentiles; and that by the coming down of the New Jerusalem from Heaven, it shall be in a state of perfect peace; and there shall be in that sense a new heaven and a new earth. But that is a state in reserve; and there will need no evidence for that which will be self-evident.

Isa. 2. 2,
&c.
ch. 11. 6,
&c.
Rev. 21. 1,
&c.
2 Pet. 2.
3, 14.

In the mean time, if we according to his promise look for a new heaven, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteousness, let us, according to the Apostle's Advice, be diligent that we be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless. Amen.

F I N I S.

